

testimony, which can leave investigations weak or incomplete. This bill would give the inspector general the authority to subpoena those former employees.

However, this authority is not without checks and balances. The bill would require the IG to notify the Attorney General before using the subpoena. The Attorney General may object and prevent the IG from issuing the subpoena if doing so would interfere with an ongoing investigation.

This authority would sunset in May of 2025 and would require Congress to then evaluate the need for this authority and if it should be continued. This is a good bill to expand oversight of the VA, and it has my full support.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing S. 2687, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2687.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

PAYMENT OF VA EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE VIA ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER TO A FOREIGN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7375) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update the payment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to allow for electronic fund transfer of educational assistance, administered by the Secretary, to a foreign institution of higher education.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7375

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PAYMENT OF VA EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE VIA ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER TO A FOREIGN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall update the payment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to allow for electronic fund transfer of educational assistance, administered by the Secretary, to a foreign institution of higher education that—

(1) provides an approved course of education to an eligible recipient of such assistance; and

(2) does not have—

- (A) an employer identification number; or
- (B) an account with a domestic bank.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 7375.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7375, introduced by Representative MIKIE SHERRILL.

This legislation directs VA to finally update its student payment systems to allow for educational assistance funds to be transmitted electronically to a foreign institution of higher education, as long as the institution is providing an approved course of study. Our committee has heard from students and schools about the impact of VA's inability to modernize its systems for student payments.

The bill has bipartisan support as well from Disabled American Veterans, Student Veterans of America, Veterans Education Success, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Madam Speaker, Representative SHERRILL's legislation is a response to strong advocacy for our student veterans studying abroad who are often unsure how their benefits will translate overseas.

Madam Speaker, I thank her for offering this legislation, I urge support and passage, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7375, a bill that would streamline the payment of GI Bill benefits.

Specifically, the bill would require that, within 90 days of enactment, VA update the electronic fund transfer system for education benefits. Without this change, an overseas school is required to maintain a U.S.-based bank account so that VA can electronically transfer payments for VA beneficiaries who attend their institution. This requirement has kept some schools from participating in the GI Bill. This leads to fewer educational choices for our veterans.

I am pleased that this bill would address this issue and expand opportunities for veterans to use their hard-earned education benefits.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7375, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 7375, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7375.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

STUDENT VETERAN WORK STUDY MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6376) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend eligibility for a certain work-study allowance paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain individuals who pursue programs of rehabilitation, education, or training on at least a half-time basis, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6376

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Student Veteran Work Study Modernization Act".

SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM TO EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR A CERTAIN WORK-STUDY ALLOWANCE PAID BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WHO PURSUE CERTAIN PROGRAMS ON AT LEAST A HALF-TIME BASIS.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall expand eligibility for the work-study allowance under section 3485 of title 38, United States Code, to individuals who are pursuing programs of rehabilitation, education, or training specified in subsection (b) of such section at a rate equal to at least half of that required of a full-time student.

(b) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER WORK-STUDY INDIVIDUALS.—In carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure the provisions of section 3485 of title 38, United States Code, apply with respect to the individuals specified in subsection (a) of this section in the same manner as to the individuals specified in subsection (b) of such section 3485, except with respect to the requirement of at least three-quarter-time student status.

(c) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) during the five-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

SEC. 3. ANNUAL REPORT REGARDING VETERANS WHO PARTICIPATE IN WORK-STUDY.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually

thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report regarding veterans who participate in work-study. Such report shall include the following elements:

- (1) The number of such veterans.
- (2) The percentage of such veterans who obtain a four-year degree.
- (3) The number of such veterans who obtain full-time work at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 4. ADJUSTMENTS OF CERTAIN LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "January 14, 2031" each place it appears and inserting "January 23, 2031".

SEC. 5. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 6376, as amended.

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Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support H.R. 6376, as amended, the Student Veteran Modernization Act, which would make much-needed improvements and modernizations to the VA work-study program.

This legislation will create a pilot program to allow part-time student veterans to access VA work-study programs for the next 5 years, ensuring they can complete their certification or degree without taking on unmanageable amounts of student debt and still care for themselves and their families.

I would prefer this be a permanent change in the law, but I understand the need to review these changes in a pilot program. I hope that when this pilot program concludes, and we have an idea of how many veterans were helped, Congress will make this change permanent.

Currently, student veterans must maintain a full class load to be eligible for work-study, which is not feasible for many veterans who are balancing families or other work obligations. With this change, part-time student veterans will be able to earn a paycheck while also earning workforce skills.

I thank Representative AXNE for her hard work on the introduction of this bill. I also thank student veterans and

the Department of Veteran Affairs for their feedback, which improved the bill and will bring more student veterans into the work-study program.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6376, as amended, the Student Veteran Work Study Modernization Act.

This bill will make changes to the VA work-study program to allow student veterans who are using the GI bill part-time to take advantage of the work-study benefit. The work-study benefit provides veterans with the opportunity to be paid for helping other veterans on campus or VA facilities.

This is a win-win for the school and the veteran, as the school does not have to pay the veteran for their work, and the veteran receives a paycheck and great work experience.

I am pleased that my amendment at the markup of this bill was accepted and that the bill is now fully offset.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 6376, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me and pass H.R. 6376, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. TRONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6376, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PRINCIPLES OF BENEFITS AUTOMATION ACT

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7153) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan to modernize the information technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7153

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Department of Veterans Affairs Principles of Benefits Automation Act".

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should increase automation in the processing of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary in accordance with the following principles:

- (1) The purpose of automation should be to increase the speed and accuracy of claims processing decisions.
- (2) Automation should be conducted in a manner that enhances the productivity of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (3) Automation should be carried out in a manner that achieves greater consistency in the processing and rating of claims by relying on patterns of similar evidence in claim files.
- (4) To the greatest extent possible, automation should be carried out by drawing from information in the possession of the Department, other Government agencies, and claimants for benefits.
- (5) Automation of any claims process or determination should not be end-to-end.
- (6) Employees of the Department should continue to make decisions with respect to the approval of claims and the granting of benefits.
- (7) Automation should not be carried out in a manner that reduces or infringes upon—
 - (A) the due process rights of claimants for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary; or
 - (B) the duties of the Secretary to assist and notify claimants.
- (8) Automation should be carried out while taking all necessary measures to protect the privacy of claimants and their personally identifiable information.
- (9) Automation of claims processing should not eliminate or reduce the Veterans Benefits Administration workforce.

(7) Automation should not be carried out in a manner that reduces or infringes upon—

(A) the due process rights of claimants for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary; or

(B) the duties of the Secretary to assist and notify claimants.

(8) Automation should be carried out while taking all necessary measures to protect the privacy of claimants and their personally identifiable information.

(9) Automation of claims processing should not eliminate or reduce the Veterans Benefits Administration workforce.

SEC. 3. PLAN FOR MODERNIZATION OF VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to appropriate congressional committees a plan for the modernization of the information technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration. The plan shall cover the first fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act and the subsequent four fiscal years and shall include each of the following:

- (1) An identification of any information system to be modernized or retired, if applicable, during the period covered by the plan.
- (2) A description of how the Secretary intends to incorporate the principles referred to in section 2 into the modernization of such information systems.
- (3) An identification of targets, for each fiscal year, by which the Secretary intends to complete the modernization of each information system or major component or functionality of such system identified under paragraph (1).
- (4) Cost estimates for the modernization of each information system identified under paragraph (1) for each fiscal year covered by the plan and in total.

(b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

- (1) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and
- (2) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.